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Media Advisory

TAKOMA PARK CITY COUNCIL OPPOSES USE OF BATTERY CAGES FOR EGG-LAYING HENS

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October 12, 2006 – Takoma Park, Maryland. On October 9, 2006, the Takoma Park City Council unanimously passed Resolution 2006-60, opposing the use of battery cages for egg-laying hens and urging consumers not to purchase eggs produced by caged hens.

Councilmember Bruce Williams (Ward 3) introduced the resolution opposing one of the most notorious factory farming practices: the intensive confinement of egg-laying hens in wire battery cages. Williams stated, "When I became aware of the various egg carton labels, I was surprised to find that no one label ensures that all of the humane standards are met. However, the "United Egg Producers Certified" label permits the worst practices. This permits egg laying chickens to spend their lives in cages with only 62 square inches of space--equivalent to two-thirds of a sheet of letter sized paper! This is not what people think of when they buy eggs, but they should--we should all buy eggs that come from chickens that don't live like that. The labels that ensure that include Certified Humane, Free Farmed, Certified Organic, cage-free, or free-range."

The City of Takoma Park is the first municipality in the United States to oppose this practice. Many countries (including Austria, Germany, and Switzerland) have banned the use of battery cages for egg-laying hens.

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the nation's largest animal protection organization, praised Councilmember Williams and the rest of the Takoma Park City Council for speaking out on this animal cruelty issue. Several Takoma Park residents attended the Council's hearing to testify in favor of the resolution, including the HSUS's Factory Farming Campaign director, Paul Shapiro.

"Little is more cruel and inhumane than the confinement of egg-laying hens in battery cages," stated Shapiro. "The HSUS commends the Takoma Park City Council, whose resolution sends a message to the egg industry that it should begin improving its notoriously poor record on animal welfare, starting with a move toward cage-free production systems."

More information on this issue is available on the City's website at www.takomaparkmd.gov, and at the Humane Society website at www.hsus.org

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